

Hobbies

It's dangerous to launder that filthy lucre

By Roger Boye

Today's column answers questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

Q—Is it possible to clean old paper money? I've got several dirty bills from the early 1900s.

L. M., Arlington Heights

A—Skilled collectors can improve the appearance of old currency by washing it with a mild soap and warm water. But the process also can damage an antique bill; thus, the novice should practice first on some common

money or let the dirt be.

Q—Where can I get insurance for my \$8,000 coin collection, which is stored in our basement? My homeowner's policy has a \$100 cap on the loss of money.

R. W., Chicago

A—Some insurance companies will write special policies to protect rare coins. Also, members of the American Numismatic Association can buy collection insurance administered by the Albert H. Wohlers & Co. of Park Ridge, Ill. Premiums are as high as \$1.50 a year per \$100 of value for collections not kept in a safe

or vault.

Another option is to rent a safe-deposit box at a local bank. Moisture in a damp basement can damage copper and silver coins.

For information about ANA membership, call, toll free, (800) 367-9723.

Q—I'm told that the material in a nickel is worth about four cents and in a quarter, about 18 cents. True or false?

I. L., Oak Park

A—False. In each case, the metal is worth just a small fraction of the coin's face value.